



DECLARATION OF  
THE CAMEROONIAN  
DELEGATION

DURING

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTY SECOND SESSION OF THE  
UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(GENEVA, 04-08 OCTOBER 2021)

Mr. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Madam/Mr. President

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all, on behalf of H.E. Paul BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon, to thank the High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi, and congratulate him for his leadership in inviting the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to take part in this year's Executive Committee session.

Cameroon fully aligns itself with the position of the African Group as expressed by the distinguished delegation of Burkina Faso.

**Madam/Mr. Chairman,**

The world is gradually recovering from the global covid 19 pandemic which has significantly affected all aspects of human activity in 2020 and most of 2021. Vulnerable, forcibly displaced people such as refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers have been among the most affected by this pandemic.

Refugee-hosting countries, such as Cameroon, have had to work beyond their already difficult financial situation to include these vulnerable people in national plans to combat the virus.

It is worth mentioning that Cameroon, in keeping with its commitment to solidarity and its legendary hospitality, is currently hosting 458,901 refugees, of whom 331,287 are from the Central African Republic and 118,693 are Nigerian nationals. The remaining 8,921 are from nearly 20 different nationalities. Most of the refugees outside the camps live in perfect harmony with the host communities.

**Dear Mr./Madam President,**

The recent coronavirus pandemic and its negative effects on the global economy reinforce the need for a radical paradigm shift in refugee management. The constant depletion of funds from traditional donors is a sign that projects funded by UNHCR and countries should evolve from humanitarian assistance to economic empowerment. This is all the more so as Cameroon expresses its reservations about the prospect of opening new refugee camps on its territory.

It is with this in mind that throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the Republic of Cameroon has prioritized the inclusion of refugees in the areas of employment and health.

First of all, the Cameroonian government signed an agreement with the UNHCR and the International Labor Organization in February 2021, to facilitate the access of refugees and asylum seekers to decent employment.

Another agreement was signed between UNHCR and the Cameroonian Ministry of Public Health in May 2021 to include refugees in the national health system. Refugees have also been included in the national response plan to the coronavirus as well as in the national vaccination plan.

**Dear Madam/Mr. President,**

Cameroon is committed to finding durable solutions to the problems of the refugees it hosts. It is in this perspective that it welcomes the effective implementation of the various tripartite agreements signed with the UNHCR and the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the one hand, and with the UNHCR and the Central African Republic on the other, for the voluntary repatriation of their refugees living in Cameroon.

Indeed, in March 2021, a little over 3000 Nigerian refugees returned voluntarily to Borno State in Nigeria in strict compliance with their rights and the international conventions to which Cameroon is a party. Repatriations will resume as soon as weather conditions permit.

As for the Central African refugees, the registration of those wishing to return to the Central African Republic is underway. The repatriation of these people will be done in due course.

**Madam/Mr. President,**

I am pleased to point out that His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, is a fervent supporter of an international solidarity movement in favor of the countries most exposed to the refugee crisis. He reiterated this during the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016, calling on the international community to increase humanitarian support to countries that, like Cameroon, host large numbers of refugees.

The mobilization of international cooperation in solving international humanitarian problems is a fundamental objective of the United Nations. Therefore, it will only be possible to find a satisfactory solution to the refugee issue if the nations of the world work together in greater solidarity. Indeed, the granting of asylum places too great a burden on most host countries.

**Madam/Mr. President,**

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank all friendly countries for their support to our humanitarian efforts. I would also like to thank the international organizations, in particular the UNHCR, whose valuable

partnership has enabled us to provide decent living conditions to the afflicted populations.

Finally, this is an opportunity for Cameroon to launch an appeal for emergency fundraising for Central African and Nigerian refugees on its territory. In view of the negative effects of the Covid 19 pandemic, refugees and asylum seekers should not be forgotten while the specter of famine and hardship hangs over them. /-

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION**