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Kenya

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. CLEOPA MAILU, EGH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA DURING THE 70<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME (EXCOM) 7-11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2019**

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**Thank you, Mr. Chairman,  
The High Commissioner,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. Let me begin by commending you on your able stewardship of this 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee. I assure you of Kenya's full support.
2. Again, Kenya aligns itself with the statements delivered by Zimbabwe, and the Kingdom of Thailand, on behalf of the African Group and the Friends of the I-Belong-Campaign-on-Statelessness, respectively.

**Mr. Chairman,**

3. Kenya has made tremendous efforts and progress towards addressing statelessness.
4. In 2016, following H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta's directive, the Makonde community who had lived amongst us for many years were granted citizenship.
5. In April, 2019, the Government of Kenya, in collaboration with UNHCR and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), organized, in Nairobi, a, **"Ministerial Conference on the Eradication of Statelessness in the Great Lakes Region."**
6. At the Ministerial Conference, Kenya made several pledges towards the eradication of statelessness in our country namely:
  - (i) *To re-establish a Task-Force on Statelessness in 2019;*
  - (ii) *To validate the draft National Action Plan to eradicate statelessness, followed by its implementation in 2019;*

- (iii) To recognize and register as Kenyan citizens members of the Shona community, who qualify for citizenship under the law by 2020;
  - (iv) To enact a new Births and Deaths Registration Act that provides safeguards to prevent statelessness by 2020;
  - (v) To accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by 2020;
  - (vi) To complete legal reforms to address and remedy statelessness in Kenya permanently by 2023 and;
  - (vii) To continue to provide protection for stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness to ensure that they enjoy their basic human rights.
7. Kenya is delighted to inform that significant progress has been made towards the realization of these pledges, including:
- a) The establishment of a National Task-force on Statelessness in August, 2019, to deal with matters of statelessness in Kenya over the next one year.
  - b) Capturing of data on stateless persons in the recently conducted National Population Census that took place in August 2019, and
  - c) Development of the *Huduma Bill*, which seeks to harmonize the law on registration of persons in Kenya.
8. These measures are a vivid demonstration of the Government's commitment to ensure that stateless persons in Kenya are not left behind.

**Mr. Chairman,**

- 9. Turning to the issues of refugees, Kenya is currently hosting **479,194 refugees**. This is a demonstration of our commitment to the 1951 Refugee Convention.
- 10. In following through its decision to close the Daadab Camp, the Government, on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, de-gazetted the Kambioos and Ifo 2 camps, which had been emptied of refugees, who voluntarily returned home.
- 11. The Government of Kenya remains fully aware of the solutions required for the various categories of persons in the remaining camps in Daadab. In consultation with UNHCR,

we envisage to continue seeking suitable solutions for those refugees who find themselves in mixed marriages as well as those who have the challenge of double registration. In this regard, the Government has constituted a National Committee to resolve the issue of the double-registered cases. We convey our appreciation to UNHCR for its financial contribution of USD 100,000 towards this exercise.

12. As we embark on these efforts, we re-state our call to the international community to re-double its efforts in creating conducive conditions in countries of origin to support the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and in dignity, as we implement the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees, adopted in March, 2017.
13. Additionally, the importance of resettlement as a protection tool, durable solution and a tangible mechanism for burden-and-responsibility-sharing cannot be over-emphasized.
14. As we approach the first Global Refugee Forum in December, 2019, we therefore, look forward to pledges of enhanced resettlement programmes that are expanded in scope, size and quality. As those pledges are developed, refugees caught in protracted refugee situations should not be forgotten.

**Mr. Chairman**

15. We acknowledge the increasing partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.
16. The two agencies have made commendable strides in the exercise on measuring the impact of refugees in host countries, as well as in the establishment of the Joint Data Centre.
17. Kenya welcomes the three (3) slots that refugee host countries have now been allocated in the Management Committee of the Joint Data Centre. Kenya conveys its appreciation to both UNHCR and the World Bank in this regard.
18. In conclusion, **Mr. Chairman**, Kenya, commends UNHCR on its on-going reforms and assures UNHCR of the Government's full support in the operationalization of the Regional Office for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region in Nairobi.

**I thank you for your attention.**