

IGAD Comprehensive Regional Response for Refugees (Special event) - EU statement – Opening Remarks

High Representative Grandi
Executive-Secretary Gebeyehu,
Honorable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests, XXX

Good morning,

I am delighted to be here among you to celebrate the remarkable progress achieved since the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration and its action plan.

In charting the path set out in the Nairobi Declaration, Heads of State and Governments took important steps to tackle a concrete challenge for the region. Indeed, since this process started, the number of refugees and IDPs in the region has substantially increased.

Yet you have not wavered in expressing your solidarity and generosity. The fact that you have kept your doors wide open to those seeking refuge in the face of unprecedented movements of population and as your own countries were facing unimaginable challenges is not lost on the rest of the world.

We have followed closely as you have adopted ambitious new commitments to facilitate the inclusion of refugees, effectively moving towards giving refugees many of the same rights and opportunities as your own citizens.

Today you will officially declare the IGAD process as a refugee support platform, one of the responsibility-sharing mechanism outlined in the Global Compact.

This is in recognition of the work that you have done and have been doing for decades. We need to capitalize on this new opportunity to ensure you get the support you deserve.

The challenge of human mobility in our century is huge, we have experienced it directly but continents like Africa experience it every day even more. Experience tells us that it is manageable but no country can manage it alone. Together we can set up humane, dignified and secure mechanisms for governing human mobility.

Over the past years, the EU has built a comprehensive approach to address forced displacement. Our approach has proven to be the right one and delivers results.

Like yours, our approach is based on solidarity, shared responsibility, multilateralism and engagement. And this is exactly what the Global Compact on Refugees is about.

No one chooses to uproot their family and flee their home. The journey to safety is often perilous and uncertain and finding shelter is only the first step.

There should be no doubt that refugees are the first ones to want to give back and contribute to the nations that have generously agreed to host them in their time of need. With the Global Compact for Refugees, not only are we aiming to more equitably share the burden carried by host nations we are also aiming at helping refugees regain their own dignity by becoming more self sufficient.

You have taken an important step by adopting courageous new commitments towards the integration of refugees in your national fabric. We understand you are expecting support.

The EU has been increasing its engagement in support of refugees and their hosts. In addition to the humanitarian aid, and development we regularly provide, under the Trust Fund for Africa, we have allocated more than Euro 396 million for support specifically related to forced displacement and the implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees in the horn of Africa. The operational committee of the Trust Fund approved just last month EUR 3 million of support to the Nairobi process including the launch of the Platform for cooperation. We believe this is an important agenda and we intend to stay the course.

But while the Global Compact for Refugees has delivered new, development-focused resources it is not enough to ensure lasting and true burden-sharing.

We need to ensure effective coordination mechanisms and strengthen on the one hand national systems but also new partnership arrangements. We need to pull in and integrate new partners at the global level and in the private sector. We also need to ensure that those who are most concerned on the ground, line Ministries, local authorities and refugees and host communities themselves are fully involved and help ensure the new resources are utilized in the best possible way.

We should all strive to work closer together to ensure what we can offer meets what you need. You can help us by providing us with some key tools that we can align our support on, such as National Action Plans or sector specific costed plans for education or health for instance.

Last Thursday the operational committee of the EU Trust Fund adopted a new EUR 10 million program that will be a direct, fully aligned and explicit development contribution to

the Government of Uganda's Wash/environment sector response plan that was adopted just last month.

Let us work together to ensure this important moment bears fruit and that just like the Nairobi process has become a shining example of for refugee management, the Platform becomes the example of how to make burden-sharing work.

Let me finish by saying that we will continue to be a proud partner in this relationship. I look forward to being with you as we make it work for the people of this region, those displaced and those who host them.

(582 words)