



## STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS LESOTHO

ON THE OCCASSSSSION OF THE 72<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME (EXCOM) 4<sup>TH</sup> -  
8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021.

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

**THANK YOU CHAIRPERSON,  
HIGH COMMISSIONER,  
HONORABLE MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS,  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES AMBASSADORS,  
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES.**

1. It is a great honor and privilege for me to represent the Kingdom of Lesotho, by addressing the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner for Refugees.
2. We extend our gratitude to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for ensuring that this auspicious occasion continues in the face of Covid-19 restrictions and commend the dedication towards humanitarian intervention to persons of concern at their fragile state.
3. The Kingdom of Lesotho aligns itself with the statement delivered by Burkina Faso on behalf of the African Group.

**CHAIRPERSON,  
HIGH COMMISSIONER,  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,  
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES**

4. In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the UNHCR Refugee Convention, the Kingdom of Lesotho acknowledges efforts by states towards the spirit of burden and responsibility sharing and we acknowledge UNHCR's unceasing efforts in highlighting the importance of political will in addressing refugee protection issues.
5. As we look upon the worst times for displacement in Africa, the Kingdom stands by the pledges it made at the Global Refugee Forum 2019 concerning refugees, internally displaced persons and at the High Level Segment on situations of statelessness.
6. The Kingdom of Lesotho is therefore pleased to announce that in 2021, the fees payable towards naturalization of refugees have been reduced in order to ensure that refugees who choose to fully integrate and become citizens are in a position to afford naturalization. As a result of this, five refugees were naturalized in July as we commemorate World Refugee Day 2021 under the theme "Together with refugees".
7. In an effort to offer refugees in the Kingdom of Lesotho favorable treatment, we have refugees employed as Doctors by the Ministry of Health and by the Christian Council of Lesotho, these Doctors hold special skills which have been crucial during this COVID-19 era. We have made relationships with institutions of higher learning

and have signed agreements which allow reservation of space for refugee students to study in various fields.

**CHAIRPERSON,  
HIGH COMMISSIONER,**

8. To eradicate possibilities of statelessness, the Kingdom of Lesotho under the Ministry of Home Affairs earlier this year, embarked on Outreach Programmes to undertake birth registration for people, including people of concern (PoC's) to UNHCR living in hard to reach areas of the Mountainous Kingdom.
9. The Kingdom of Lesotho has made a commitment under the UN Agenda 2030, to "leave no one behind", including internally displaced persons. It is in this spirit that, the Ministry has undertaken the Outreach Programme to sensitize people of the Kingdom about causes of displacement and the resultant effects thereof, to map a way for the collection of data of the internally displaced.

**CHAIRPERSON,  
HIGH COMMISSIONER,**

10. We appreciate that COVID- 19 is a stumbling block which has brought about challenges in refugee host countries. The persons of concern have been hit hard and some have lost their livelihood whilst others have been forced to vacate their houses, as they lost

their jobs and rely on Government for their daily upkeep, while others have been forced to return to reception center with limited space.

11. The Kingdom of Lesotho is currently experiencing killings resulting from Famo Music and illegal Mining gang wars which manifest from tit-for-tat killings targeting bread winners in the families, which intern displace other family members especially women and children. This is an emergency threat in the Kingdom, as it is also targeting security elements.
12. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge UNHCR's efforts and dedication to the fight against the financial instability resultant from COVID-19 to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees. It is with the same spirit, that we humbly request UNHCR to provide necessary assistance to combat issues of internal displacement.

**CHAIRPERSON,**

**HIGH COMMISSIONER,**

13. The Kingdom of Lesotho applauds UNHCR and the African Union efforts in responsibility sharing by providing financial assistance to reduce the plight of refugees, address issues of statelessness and internal displacement in developing countries.
14. Asylum seekers continue to flock the Kingdom's borders seeking refuge, and coupled with internal displacement and statelessness, the national system needs man power and additional

resources to effectively execute the mandate of the protection of persons of concern.

15. We look forward to the studies to be conducted on internal displacement and statelessness which will give the Kingdom a fighting chance by realizing the magnitude of these persons of concern in order to provide the necessary protection which will lead to the eradication of statelessness and pave the way forward for the return, integration and/ resettlement of internally displaced persons.

16. In conclusion, the Kingdom of Lesotho would like to reassure the High Commissioner of its commitment to the spirit of burden and responsibility sharing. We reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of people of concern to UNHCR and regard highly our international obligations.

**I THANK YOU ALL!**

**PEACE**

**RAIN**

**PROSPERITY**