



**STATEMENT BY AMB. LUCY KIRUTHU, HSC, AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE & CHARGE D’AFFAIRES, A.I. OF THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN
GENEVA DURING THE 72ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER’S PROGRAMME (EXCOM) 4TH - 8TH OCTOBER, 2021**

**Thank you, Madam Chair,
The High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. Let me begin by commending you Madam Chair on your able stewardship of this Session of the Executive Committee. I assure you of Kenya’s full support.
2. Kenya aligns itself with the statements delivered by Burkina Faso and Azerbaijan, on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively.

Madam Chair,

3. Kenya thanks the High Commissioner for his insightful opening remarks, which have aptly painted a vivid description of the current global context of forced displacement taking place against the backdrop of multiple global challenges.
4. The hybrid nature of this meeting is a clear indication that the international community continues to grapple with the evolving complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to vaccines remains a foremost priority for states around the world. As the steadfast calls for vaccine equity continue, neither conflicts, nor forced displacement have stopped. It is unfortunate and indeed most regrettable that the numbers of forcibly displaced persons, globally, are historically, at an all-time high.

Madam Chair,

5. Kenya continues to host thousands of refugees from across the region and has continued to do so for decades.
6. At present, Kenya is generously hosting a total of **508,033** refugees; **223,817** in Dadaab, **203,193** in Kakuma and **81,023** in urban areas. The increase in the number of refugees, since our last address to this August Assembly in October, 2020 demonstrates Kenya's unwavering commitment to its international obligations.
7. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its accompanying challenges, Kenya has continued to uphold its impeccable humanitarian credentials. From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Kenya has worked closely with UNHCR to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on refugees hosted in Kenya. The Government of Kenya has included refugees in its response plans and continues to do so. UNHCR has aligned its response plan at the country level to the Government's priorities and is working with the National Coordination Committee.
8. Our commitment to refugee protection has further been demonstrated by the robust partnership and constructive engagement that Kenya continues to enjoy with UNHCR. Kenya is grateful for the two visits made by the High Commissioner to Kenya earlier this year, a reaffirmation of the shared vision and interest to find lasting solutions for refugees hosted in Kenya.
9. Following a constructive meeting between His Excellency the President of Kenya and the High Commissioner for Refugees on 29th April, 2021, the Government of Kenya and UNHCR issued a joint statement on the Roadmap on Closure of Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps.
10. The roadmap envisages the closure of the camps by 30th June, 2022, with various options for different categories of populations in the camps. To date,

the exercise is at de-registration and verification stage. We call upon the international community to support us in this regard.

11. The continued search for durable solutions is one that requires momentum from the international community. The emergence of new conflicts and the protracted nature of forced displacement requires the international community to re-double its efforts in this regard. Enhanced efforts on voluntary repatriation and resettlement are urgently required. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an additional burden on the existing disproportionate burden borne by refugee host countries.

Madam Chair,

12. As a member of the core-group of the I-Belong-Campaign on Statelessness, the Government of Kenya has remained true to the pledges made during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness, held during the 70th Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee, in October, 2019. Kenya pledged, *“to recognize and register as Kenyan citizens members of the Shona community, who qualify for citizenship under the law by 2020.”*
13. In fulfilling this pledge, on 12th December, 2020, during Kenya’s 57th Independence Day celebrations, His Excellency the President of Kenya, granted citizenship to 1,670 stateless Shona and 1,300 stateless persons of Rwandan descent who qualify under the law as Kenyan citizens.
14. This landmark decision by the Government of Kenya, means that solutions have been afforded to the two communities who have lived in Kenya for decades. This historic gesture comes four years after the granting of citizenship to the Makonde in 2016.

Madam Chair,

15. With the High-Level Officials Meeting two months away, Kenya reiterates the importance of the meeting as an opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, new displacement crises and the complexities of

protracted situations all around the world, this meeting will be a crucial sound-board of whether the international community is on the right track.

16. The urgency for the international community to be on the right-track is crucial. Millions of forcibly displaced persons globally are counting on us.

I thank you for your attention.