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Uganda



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



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### STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD AT GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

Your Excellencies, we know that no one chooses to be a refugee and as a Country, have our own painful experience of flight. It is in this spirit that we have welcomed our brothers and sisters who are forced to flee their homes and countries due to starvation, violence and persecution.

We understand the critical importance of treating refugees humanely and with dignity. With over 1.3 million refugees on our territory, Uganda remains the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest refugee hosting country in the world, and the largest in Africa.

We welcomed nearly 1 million refugees in Uganda in less than 18 months. At the height, this was 6000 people per day. Together with UNHCR, we biometrically verified the number of refugees in record time. With our partners, we evolved and tightened government systems to ensure accountability and to safeguard the scarce resources available to meet the needs.

Today, these systems stand as global models to manage risk in emergency situations based on lessons learned.

Despite the acute influx, our progressive refugee management model continues to include an open border policy and approach which provides refugees with land, freedom of movement, equal access to Government-provided social services such as education and healthcare, and the right to work and set up businesses. This provides refugees greater prospects of self-reliance than found anywhere in the world.

But we cannot take this for granted. Our model is founded on commitments to responsibility sharing by the international community in the Refugee Convention, New York Declaration and the Global Compact on Refugees. **Uganda remains among the few countries on the globe that continues <sup>to</sup> meet its responsibility as a refugee hosting country in line with instruments.**

Your Excellencies, first and foremost, we call upon you to politically address root cause of displacement in the region by heightening efforts to prevent and resolve conflict and invest in the improvement of conditions in countries of origin so that refugees can realize their hope of returning home.

On the occasion of the first **Global Refugee Forum** the Republic of Uganda submits six concrete pledges, all supported

with costed budgets which make clear where support from the international community is needed. We hope to demonstrate that a comprehensive response as envisioned in the Compact can be achieved.

1. **First, Uganda pledges to maintain its progressive refugee policy, keep its borders open and continue its settlement approach to shelter refugees in settlements alongside Ugandan communities.**

Uganda will answer the humanitarian imperative to ensure that all new arriving refugees and asylum seekers benefit from life-saving basic needs as prioritized in the Refugee Response Plan (RRP).

2. To address longer term approaches and their sustainability, Uganda pledges to continue to **include refugees in our upcoming *National Development Plan III 2021/22 - 2025/26*; and national statistics.**

3. Despite the scale, **Uganda will include all refugee children into the national education system by implementing the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities.** Specifically, we pledge to increase access to quality education for 579,000 refugee and host community children and youth.

4. Through implementation of the Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan (HSIRRP), we **pledge to improve equitable access to and quality of health services for over 1 million refugees and 7 million host communities.**

5. We pledge to promote **inclusive and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems** through the implementation of the Water & Environment Response Plan.

6. Finally, **Uganda pledges to maintain the integrity of the asylum system.** Building on lessons learned, Uganda pledges to ensure accountability through the multiple mechanisms we have built to ensure effective management of resources, enhanced screenings at reception points, reduction of the RSD backlog, *Refugee Status Determination* two-way communication mechanisms, a national platform for refugee engagement and a biometric refugee registration database.

Thank you. For God and My Country.