

Chairperson,

At the outset allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to thank and commend the High Commissioner - Mr. Filippo Grandi and the entire UNHCR Secretariat for the humanitarian work that the Agency continues to do around the world.

Chairperson,

Tanzania has continuously and generously been hosting a large number of refugees for more than five decades and has maintained her readiness to find durable solutions for various groups of refugees. A lot of her own resources have gone into supporting refugees since the 1960s such as issuance of land, provision of security, health and education services as well as exempting taxes for humanitarian goods and waivers of work permit fees for both the humanitarian and refugee workers.

As we meet here today, Tanzania continues to keep her borders open in providing asylum to credible and genuine persons fleeing persecution, civil unrest, ethnic tensions and political instabilities from their countries of origin. Currently, Tanzania hosts more than **280,000** such refugees and asylum seekers.

However, the continued presence of a large number of refugees and asylum seekers in North Western Tanzania, has increased competition between the refugee population and the local communities for limited resources and social economic opportunities. Although we observe the gradual increase in burden and responsibility sharing in addressing refugee related issues, we call on the international community to do a lot more to ease the burden on Tanzania by addressing some of the major challenges.

Among the challenges facing refugees in Tanzania is the lack of sustainable alternative sources of energy to firewood. More than 170 tonnes of fire woods are harvested every day. Moreover, women and children are walking over 20 Km every day in search of firewood. Once again, we urge the international community to support the Government of Tanzania in providing an alternate source of energy.

Another challenge concerns the more than 50,000 Burundian refugees who fled to Tanzania in 1972 who are now self-settled in Kigoma villages and others are in old settlements. This group has been completely forgotten in terms of provision of basic social services. We, urge UNHCR and the international community at large, in the spirit of burden and responsibility sharing to support the Government of Tanzania to provide assistance to this particular group.

In conclusion, the United Republic of Tanzania wishes to make the following pledges:

- i. To continue to allow access to its territory to all persons facing persecution as defined under domestic legislations and the international instruments to which the country is a party,
- ii. To continue to work with UNHCR and other stakeholders to improve the quality of education for the refugees,
- iii. To ensure that asylum seekers have access to a fair, efficient and transparent process of refugee status determination,
- iv. To finalise Refugee Employment Regulations in order to accord refugees access to Tanzania Labour market,
- v. To find durable solutions to the remaining 1972 Burundian refugees,

vi. To continue supporting and facilitating the voluntary repatriation of refugees.

Finally, allow me Mr. Chairperson to recognise and express our sincere appreciation to the UNHCR, IOM, WFP and all other UN Agencies as well as other stakeholders for their continued co-operation in supporting the Tanzania Refugee Programmes.

I thank you for you kind attention.